

U.S. Patent Application No. 09/955,554
Amendment After Final Rejection dated February 17, 2006
In Response to Final Office Action Dated November 18, 2005

REMARKS

Continued examination and favorable consideration of the present application are respectfully requested.

Claims 46, 48, 49, 52, 53, and 55-57 remain pending in this application. Claims 46, 49, 52, 53, 55, and 57 have been amended. Support for the amendments to claims 46, 52, 53, and 55 can be found, for example, at least in the previously presented claims. Claims 49 and 57 have been amended to add a colon (:) and thus be even more grammatically correct. No new matter has been added.

Miscellaneous

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Nagpaul for indicating that claims 48, 49, 56, and 57 are allowable and that claims 46, 52, 53, and 55 would be allowable if rewritten.

Double Patenting

At page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-14 and 34-57 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as allegedly being unpatentable over claims 6-30 of U.S. Patent No. 6,432,719 B1 to Vann et al. Applicants herewith submit a duly executed terminal disclaimer and the required fee, which should suffice to overcome this rejection. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

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Rejection of Claims

At page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1, 14, 34, 35, 42-45, 47, 50, 51, and 54 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Astle (U.S. Patent No. 5,525,302). These claims have been canceled rendering this rejection moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

At page 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 36-41 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Astle (U.S. Patent No. 5,525,302). These claims have been canceled rendering this rejection moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Entry of this amendment is proper under 35 C.F.R. § 1.116 because the amendment: (1) places the application in immediate condition for allowance for the reasons discussed here; (2) does not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration because the amendments simplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (3) satisfies a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; (4) does not present any additional claims; and (5) places the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendment was not presented earlier because it is made in response to arguments raised in the final Office Action. Entry of the amendment is thus respectfully requested.

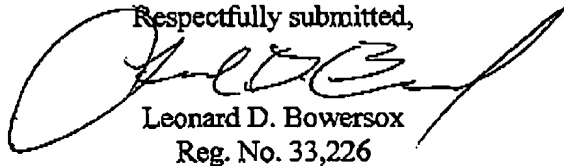
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CONCLUSION

Should the Examiner deem that any further action by applicants or applicants' undersigned representative is desirable and/or necessary, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number set forth below.

Should any fees be necessary in connection with this filing, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account No. 50-0925. Should an extension of time be due, the Commissioner is requested to hereby consider this a Petition and to charge the appropriate extension of time fee to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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